

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method comprising the steps of:

(a) managing terminal management information concerning a plurality of communication terminals of a user;

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(b) identifying, when a call addressed to said user is initiated, one or more terminals that can accept said call by referring to an ability needed for a communication involved in said call and the terminal management information concerning said plurality of

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communication terminals managed by said step (a); and

(c) separating information involved in the call into items of information to be sent to said one or more terminals identified by said step (b) and combining items of information from said one or more terminals identified by said step (b) into information to be sent to one of the plurality of communication terminals that initiates said call,

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a virtual terminal being formed by said one or more terminals identified by said step (b) and

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communicating with said one of the plurality of communication terminals.

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2. The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of converting the items of information separated by said step (b) using an information coding

scheme conforming to said one of the plurality of terminals into those using information coding schemes employed in said one or more communication terminals and vice versa.

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3. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein  
10 the terminal management information managed by said step (a) includes predetermined communication abilities of the plurality of communication terminals.

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4. A virtual terminal configuring device comprising:

a first part managing terminal management  
20 information concerning a plurality of communication terminals of a user;

a second part identifying, when a call addressed to said user is initiated, one or more terminals that can accept said call by referring to an ability needed for a  
25 communication involved in said call and the terminal management information concerning said plurality of communication terminals managed by said first part; and

a third part separating information involved in the call into items of information to be sent to said one  
30 or more terminals identified by said second part and combining items of information from said one or more terminals identified by said second part into information to be sent to one of the plurality of communication

terminals that initiates said call,

a virtual terminal being formed by said one or more terminals identified by said second part and communicating with said one of the plurality of communication terminals.

10           5. The virtual terminal configuring device as claimed in claim 4, further comprising a fourth part converting the items of information separated by said second part using an information coding scheme conforming to said one of the plurality of communication terminals  
15 into those using information coding schemes employed in said one or more communication terminals and vice versa.

20           6. The virtual terminal configuring device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the terminal management information managed by said first part includes predetermined communication abilities of the plurality of  
25 communication terminals.

30           7. The virtual terminal configuring device as claimed in claim 4, wherein said third part compresses and expands the items of information in accordance with communication abilities of said one or more communication

terminals identified by said second part.

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8. The virtual terminal configuring device as claimed in claim 4, wherein said third part filters the items of information in accordance with communication abilities of said one or more communication terminals  
10 identified by said second part.

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9. A communication system comprising:  
a plurality of communication terminals of users;

and

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a virtual terminal configuring device to which the plurality of communication terminals are coupled,  
said virtual terminal configuring device  
comprising:

a first part managing terminal management information concerning said plurality of communication terminals;

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a second part identifying, when a call addressed to a first one of the users is initiated, one or more terminals of said first one of the users that can accept said call by referring to an ability needed for a communication involved in said call and the terminal  
30 management information concerning the communication terminals; and

a third part separating information involved in the call into items of information to be sent to said one

or more terminals identified by said second part and combining items of information from said one or more terminals identified by said second part into information to be sent to one of the communication terminals of a  
5 second one of the users that initiates said call,

a virtual terminal being formed by said one or more terminals identified by said second part so that said virtual terminal of the first one of the users and said one of the communication terminals of the second user can  
10 communicate with each other.

15 10. The communication system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the plurality of communication terminals include communication terminals coupled to the virtual terminal configuring device via a radio communication interface.

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25 11. The communication system as claimed in claim 9, wherein the plurality of communication terminals include communication terminals coupled to the virtual terminal configuring device via a network.

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12. A virtual terminal configuring device comprising:

a virtual terminal function unit forming a virtual terminal including communication terminals of a first user coupled to said virtual terminal configuring device, said virtual terminal being capable of

5 communicating with a communication terminal of a second user having a communication protocol different from communication protocols of said communication terminals; and

said virtual terminal function unit including a

10 part separating information from the communication terminal of the second user into items of information respectively conforming to the communication protocols of the communication terminals forming the virtual terminal and combining items of information from the communication

15 terminals forming the virtual terminal into information conforming to the communication protocol of the communication terminal of the second user by referring to terminal management information concerning the communication terminals of the first and second users.

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